

Minutes for Workgroup #174 – Informed Delivery APP

Session 23: 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. EST WebEx

The meeting began with a question from Phil Thompson asking about the limitations of program, based on the conversation last week about USPS competing unfairly with the industry. Carrie stated that the current status is that the USPS can't share the name and/or address information (Section 412 of the privacy act prohibits the USPS from doing so).

Talked about this being a consumer tool, not a marketer's tool. Not a product that will fly. Advantage of mail is point to point. Obviously there is a cost to the USPS to exchange the file with the mailer and so forth. Critical message is the mailpiece. Steve B says people will prefer to receive it on their mobile and it will kill the mail. Phil disagreed and stated that he didn't feel we needed to have this same conversation again, it wasn't a panacea.

In relation to getting data back from marketing campaigns (for our Response Rate and Feedback Loop subgroup work product discussion), Carrie pointed out that Radio, TV, Billboards, are media with aggregate metrics, where the individual is not known. Members acknowledged those media are traditionally used to broadcast a message whereas mail is for pinpointing a message. Tracy said the PURLS can bridge the gap, make it less like radio. Dylan suggested that people interested in generating high click-through rates, savvy marketers will know who's participating in the program and who's not. For the most part, direct mailers measure and predict results. Is the extra effort to capture & measure response worth it? Carrie stated that there are two test mailers currently participating in interactive campaigns; a flat subscription and a retail trifold letter.

Carrie talked again about the consumer survey and mentioned that 5,400 NY pilot participants were surveyed. There were 30+ questions. Consumer Insights is analyzing the data to program office & management. It might be best to see the survey results to gauge consumer behavior vs. us predicting what it will be.

In relation to the agenda and the image suppression survey, Carrie shared the results. We had 39 respondents out of 60 WG members (65%). Out of the 39 respondents, only 18% selected the option to show all the images; 42% supported a Mailer Opt-In format and 39% supported a Mailer Opt-Out format. Jerry & Phil interpreted the workgroup survey results, putting the numbers together, as a clear message from the workgroup members that the USPS needs to offer the Opt out or Opt In, rather than rolling out the program the way it is.

Tracy Sikes pointed out, as a mail service provider; he would prefer the default be "Opt-In". Tracy expressed concern that in an Opt-Out program, any miscommunication means we get charged for a mistake, whereas with Opt-In requirements, the risk of incurring a fee due to an error is significantly lower.

Jerry Faust asked how this information will be shared with Gary Reblin and suggested we escalate the survey results before final decision making. Carrie stated that can we certainly share them out prior to our Resolution Statement; however, we need to agree on what is being stated. For example, when you compile the numbers as a whole, 54% of the WG either didn't respond at all, didn't rank the options, or voted to leave as is.

Sam asked what would an opt-in /opt-out process look like? Carrie suggested the workgroup needs to recommend this. It could be triggered via Mail.dat; however, we also need to take into consideration the alternate file for workflows and Mailers that don't use Mail.dat.

Dylan posed a scenario – a letter from one's daughter – and asked the question, if part of an opt-in program, then this sender has no choice? Brought up the issue of C to C mailings, C to B mailings, etc. Does the USPS have to provide the Opt-In/Opt-Out feature to everyone? Big and small mailers alike? Consumers? If the workgroup feels strongly on this, we could help flesh out how it would work.

Angelo said opt-in and opt-out would only be relevant to edoc. Currently the default is that everyone gets all mail. There is no solution in place to exclude images.

Consumers want to see it (all the mail). Jerry says that Gary is thinking all mail will go in the Informed Delivery program & he feels that these survey results show there needs to be Opt-In or Opt-Out. The USPS position currently is that all the automated mail would be scanned and included.

Sam said it is interesting to know how workgroup members feel, share fear and expectations, however, he urged fellow members to be scientists. The intent is to gather everyone's questions and feedback and then use data whenever possible to help make business decisions.

We went on to discuss the proposed new survey questions. We had asked WG members to review sample questions posed and provide feedback. With the initial 5 responses, we got some new questions, some suggested edits, and some votes for existing questions. Steve stated that he had submitted the questions approved and vetted by AccuZIP and that the survey should only go to WG members. Carrie stated that her and Jody will review all of the questions with the entire WG and come to a consensus on the final questions posed. All agreed that the survey is for the MTAC WG only at this time.

Jody briefly covered the Commingled Mail flows that were created by another small subset of the team. There were no suggested changes.